

## Meetings and Other Forums Administration and Participation

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<b>Business Unit</b>	Governance and Assurance	<b>Document ID</b>	10654808

### Objectives

This Procedure supports Councillors in performing their duties as elected officials. It is designed to enhance the flow of information and allow Councillors to be provided with timely information in anticipation of attending forums other than Ordinary Meetings which require organisation by way of a program.

This Procedure outlines the notice periods that are to be afforded to Councillors to allow participation in all activities from an informed position.

The objectives of this Procedure are:

1. To provide for specific timeframes within which Councillors will be provided with information to enable the effective and timely provision of information to Councillors prior to attending an information sharing forum;
2. To provide for an agreed approach and structure to non-decision making forums; and
3. To ensure that the Local Government Principles are reflected in the conduct of non-decision making forums.

### Scope

This Procedure applies to all Councillors and all Council officers who are involved in the organisation or participation in the non-decision making forums.

### Procedure Actions

#### Workshops

Workshops are a process for Councillors, employees and external parties to collaborate, develop or advance proposals, such as masterplans, and include topics of strategic importance to collectively develop proposals prior to formal decision-making.

Examples of workshops include:

- Discussions to determine strategic priorities;
- The development of the budget for the coming financial year;
- The initial development of a new Planning Scheme;
- Initial input into the development or review of a Council Policy.

While workshops are not formal decision-making forums they may be used as the basis for officers to develop a firmer proposal which will be considered formally by Council in the future. Where a report is presented to Council that has been in part developed by collaborating in a workshop, it will be a requirement to note this in the 'Consultation' section of the report template.

## **Briefing Sessions**

Briefing sessions provide a valuable opportunity to enhance the decision-making process and are a forum for the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Officers to address any Councillor questions and provide additional background on matters coming before Council for decision. No decision-making or voting takes place at these meetings.

Briefing sessions provide a forum for:

- Councillors to be fully informed on complex matters that will allow for more effective discussion and debate during subsequent formal meetings;
- Councillors to share their views with each other; and for Councillors to seek further information, clarification and background details from Council officers or any guest presenters;
- Officers to advise Councillors of their professional opinions and reasoning behind their intended recommendations; or
- Presentations by an external party.

## **Schedule**

Briefing Sessions and Workshops shall be held in accordance with the Scenic Rim Regional Council Meeting schedule.

A notice of meeting for each Briefing Session and Workshop will be provided to Councillors as part of the list of topics, including:

- a) The day, time and location of the meeting;
- b) The purpose of the meeting; and
- c) List of officers or external parties presenting.

The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer may call a Briefing Session and Workshop session as necessary for the discussion of emergent matters. If a member of the Executive Team believes it is necessary to schedule a Briefing Session or Workshop with Councillors outside of the scheduled sessions, the General Manager shall liaise with the Chief Executive Officer who shall decide whether to call an additional Briefing Session or Workshop.

The CEO is responsible for preparing a list of topics for each of these forums.

## **Participants**

Briefing Sessions and Workshops are not formal meetings of Council and are generally not open to the public unless otherwise invited. There is no live streaming of these meetings. While no quorum is required, all Councillors are required to attend Briefing Sessions and Workshops. In order to make the best use of time, resources and people, the Chief Executive Officer shall determine what Council officers

are required to attend any given meeting.

A register of attendance will be recorded to support transparent and accountable processes. External persons may attend a Briefing Session or Workshop upon invitation from the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer. If an external person (for example a consultant, contractor or guest) is to be present at a Briefing Session or Workshop the person's name, title and company shall be included on the list of topics. The external person shall only be present at the Briefing Session or Workshop during discussion of the item for which their name appears next to on the list of topics.

### **Administration**

The Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor and Councillors will determine the matters to be presented at a Briefing Session or Workshop. The types of matters deemed appropriate for consideration include matters that are:

- a) of particular strategic significance for Council;
- b) involve notable community engagement, impact or concern;
- c) involve complex procedural, legal or factual considerations; or
- d) the Chief Executive Officer considers appropriate for a Councillor Briefing Session.

The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that a copy of the list of topics and any briefing notes/attachments are circulated to Councillors at the earliest opportunity.

Presentations and background material presented as part of a Briefing Session or Workshop that is confidential in nature shall be clearly marked 'CONFIDENTIAL' by the officer preparing the material. Matters arising from Briefing Sessions or Workshops will be recorded with a response regarding the outcome provided to Councillors if required. Where the matter arising relates to the business of an upcoming Council meeting the response will be provided prior to the commencement of the Council meeting.

Council will publish a list of topics to be discussed at each of these forums on Council's website unless it is not permitted to do so due to confidentiality reasons. Council will not publish any reports, presentations or associated material unless otherwise approved by the CEO.

Brief notes will be taken at Briefing Sessions and Workshops to include:

- a) the name of each Councillor who attended the meeting;
- b) other persons (e.g. members of the public, council officers) who attended the meeting;
- c) description of matters discussed at the meeting;
- d) any conflicts of interest declared;
- e) a copy of presentation material provided during the briefing (including slide decks, handouts);and
- f) any matters arising as a result of the discussion

### **Chairperson**

The CEO is the chairperson for all Briefing Sessions or Workshops. The CEO, as chairperson, can ensure that Councillor comments are not mistaken as directions to employees and is best placed to provide advice to Councillors on how they can obtain more information if required.

The chairperson will ensure that discussions relate to policy issues, community views and possible

options for consideration of Councillors. As Briefing Sessions and Workshops are not formal Council meetings, talks should not extend to comments on recommendations from officers as these types of discussions must be in formal Council meetings where they are open to the public.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

While Briefing Sessions or Workshops are not formal decision-making forums, Councillors are still obligated to manage their conflicts of interest. Councillors are not permitted to take part in discussions on matters where they have a conflict of interest. The only exception is where Council have previously determined, at an Ordinary Meeting of Council, that a Councillor has a conflict of interest but is permitted to participate in the decision making. This exception is only valid if circumstances surround the conflict of interest have not changed since the decision on the conflict was made. In all other cases, it is the responsibility of the Councillor to advise the CEO of their conflict of interest and not participate in the relevant item. It is not the role of Councillors present at a Briefing Session or Workshop to determine another Councillor's conflict of interest.

Councillors who believe they have a conflict of interest should notify the CEO in writing prior to the Briefing Session or Workshop in order for the appropriate advice to be provided.

## **Public Question Time**

### **Background**

Council has committed through its Community Plan and Corporate Plan to develop initiatives and processes to communicate and engage with the region's diverse community.

A broad range of other options for communication with Council are listed on Council's website. Councillors are also available individually to receive and respond to questions from members of the Scenic Rim community by telephone or email.

Council's Standing Orders for Council Meetings details how a member of the public may have a matter considered at a Council Meeting by way of a formal deputation.

Members of the community are also encouraged to ask questions of Council with the intention of having those questions, and any answer given, read out at an Ordinary Meeting.

### When Public Question Time will be held:

Public Question Time forms part of the Ordinary Meeting of Council. During Public Question time, the CEO will read out the public question and then provide a response to that question.

### Submitting a Question

Members of the public should submit their question in writing in accordance with the following process:

- Proposed questions should be submitted at least five full business days prior to the scheduled date of the Ordinary Meeting; and
- Proposed questions must be submitted in writing to the CEO and clearly identified as questions for Public Question Time;
- The author of the question must provide their name and address along with the question.

- The author of the question must consent to their name and suburb being read out along with the question.
- The CEO will determine whether the question is suitable for Public Question Time or whether it is best referred to a Council officer to make a direct response to the person asking the question.
- Where the number of questions received for a Public Question Time may exceed the allotted time, questions may be referred to the next Public Question Time at the discretion of the CEO;
- For complex questions requiring research the CEO may take that question on notice and delay the response to a future meeting of Council;
- The CEO will determine whether each submitted question will be accepted for Public Question Time.

#### Questions may not be accepted in certain circumstances

The CEO may have regard to the following criteria for refusing to accept and answer a question at Public Question Time.

- Does not relate to Council activities;
- Is offensive, defamatory or includes improper language;
- Is unduly long; or
- Includes or requests information which may constitute a breach of privacy or confidentiality;
- Is subject to current legal or regulatory compliance process;
- Relates to an application which is awaiting Council determination;
- Is more appropriately dealt with through other established Council processes (eg. Complaints Management);
- Has already been responded to by Council; or
- Involves participation in lobbying activity contrary to the requirements of the *Integrity Act 2009*;

The CEO is to advise the Mayor of all proposed questions and answers prior to the Ordinary Meeting. The Chairperson has the final determination of what questions are to be answered at an Ordinary Meeting.

A person who has submitted a proposed question may be notified prior to the meeting if their question is not accepted for discussion at Public Question Time.

#### How Public Question Time will be run

Public Question Time is recognised in Council's meeting agenda section titled "Public Question Time." During this session, the CEO is to read out the letters received for Public Question Time and read out the answer to each question. Public Question Time should take no longer than 15 minutes but is subject to extension on approval of the Chairperson.

## Definitions

Nil.

## Related Documents

1. *Local Government Act 2009*;
2. *Local Government Regulation 2012*;
3. Standing Orders for Council Meetings;
6. Confidentiality of Council Information; and
7. Acceptable Request Guidelines Policy.

This Procedure supports the Scenic Rim Regional Council Corporate Plan 2018-2023, in particular Theme - Open and Responsive Government.

## Approval and Review Details

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Council 27/05/2019
Amendment Authority and Date	Council 04/07/2023
Notes	Reviewed and updated to new meeting structure.

## Adopted By:

### SCENIC RIM REGIONAL COUNCIL

Date: 04/07/2023

## VERSION INFORMATION

Version No	Date	Key Changes
1	27/05/2019	Corporate and Community Services Committee, 21/05/2019 Item No. 1.2 New as a result of review due to changes in Local Government Act and Regulations. Ordinary Meeting Item No. 6
2	14/12/2020	Ordinary Meeting Item No. 11.9 Revised and amended with new model templates.
3	04/07/2023	Ordinary Meeting Item No. 10.5 Reviewed and updated to new meeting structure.